

Effective Date: 9/19/83
Revised: Sept. 2012

APP #37
Historic Districts Commission
Authority Over Town Projects

In 1961, under State legislation requested by the Town, the Historic Districts were established and the authority of the Historic Districts Commission spelled out. The legislation has subsequently been amended to expand the districts and revise some wording.

Periodically, the question has arisen about the Commission's authority over Town projects. This matter was clarified in 1983 with Town Counsel, and below is the Town's policy concerning the relationship with the Historic Districts Commission and their authority over Town projects.

The general policy is that the Town shall seek at all times to cooperate and support the goals of the Historic Districts Commission legislation and the Commission. More specifically, all Town projects fall under the legislation with the following exceptions:

1. The surface, width, and path of roads.
2. Traffic regulatory signs.
3. Street light poles, fixtures, and wires.
4. Emergency situations where, in the opinion of the Town Manager, there is imminent danger to public health and safety: e.g. a bridge ready to collapse.
5. Shade trees declared dead by the Tree Warden may be removed. The new tree to be planted will fall under jurisdiction of the Commission.

The legislation itself exempts routine maintenance, projects not visible from the street and interior changes.

The exemption under number one above only applies to the road surface. It does not apply to curbing, tree removal, walls, sidewalks and so on. Any department head questioning whether a project must be submitted should seek clarification from the Town Manager and/or the Chair of the Historic Districts Commission.

Distribution: All Department Heads
Historic Districts Commission
Board of Selectmen